

No Limits

Volunteering as a model of youth development



“Volunteering has made me realise that there is **no limit** to what you can achieve if you accept the challenges you are offered.”

A young Scout leader



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Introduction

Young people have always volunteered. History over the past century tells countless stories of young people who have made a contribution to the world around them.

Youth work itself has often been the catalyst for young people to turn their focus onto the needs of others. From the early pioneering work of the YMCAs in the 1840s, through the development of Scouting in the early years of the twentieth century, to the emergence of detached youth work after the second world war, youth work has challenged young people to shape their destiny through positive engagement in their local communities.

Purpose

'No Limits' is not an attempt to re-write the manual on youth volunteering. It has three aims:

1. To set the **context** in which youth volunteering is currently taking place in Scotland
2. To provide some **guiding principles**, based on existing good practice, on how to develop young people as volunteers
3. To highlight the value of **volunteering as an approach to youth development**

Who it is for

'No Limits' is aimed primarily at youth work providers who want to support young people as volunteers – as peer educators, junior leaders, activists, or simply as part of their overall youth work programme.

'No Limits' will also be of use to other organisations planning to develop a more youthful volunteer workforce.

How we developed it

'No Limits' is part of the Scottish Government's Volunteering Action Plan¹, and the result of two main pieces of research work:

- A review of recent research, and of policy documentation on youth volunteering
- A series of interviews with national youth organisations, with local authority partners in Scotland, and with employers.

Our keynote was to draw together what managers and practitioners saw as good practice, and not to 're-invent the wheel'.

Some names in the case studies have been changed for reasons of confidentiality.

Key themes

Discussions with managers and practitioners enabled us to develop ten key themes that underpin good practice.

1. **Focus on the activity not the volunteering**
Young people are attracted by the activity and the difference it will make. The expression 'volunteering' may be a disincentive.
2. **Have high expectations of young people**
Young people thrive when they know that people believe in them. The greatest growth often occurs when risks are taken with young people.
3. **Seize the moment** If a young person makes an offer, snap it up. Young people's time frames are notoriously short. Great things can be achieved in a short space of time.
4. **Ensure there are supportive adults** Good practice in youth work is a partnership between adults and young people². When you're asking young people to take on new roles, that support is even more crucial.
5. **Make use of peer methods** Young people can bring special energy and credibility to volunteering. They instinctively know the 'market', and can reach parts that adults can only dream of.
6. **Build confidence** We all need confidence, but it is especially important for young people as they try out new experiences and challenges. Shattered confidence at 16 can be devastating.
7. **Always give credit (but accreditation is optional)**
Young people always appreciate being thanked and publicly recognised for their volunteering. Formal accreditation needs to be a conscious choice.
8. **Build skills** Volunteering can provide the bedrock 'core skills' development that young people need for employment. Ask the CBI!
9. **Take time to reflect** Learning is most effective when the learner understands both what and how they are learning. Young people value the time taken to reflect on their volunteering experience.
10. **Recognise the realities of youthful lives**
Young people's lives are less predictable than those of adults. Flexibility is needed to respond to this, and to help young volunteers 'seize the moment'.



The volunteer life cycle

The model below is based on one commonly used in the volunteering sector. It is the same broad model as used in the publication 'Growing better youth work'.

Recruitment



Induction



Training and development

Progression

Recognition and accreditation

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What research tells us about youth volunteering

There has been a relatively large amount of research on youth volunteering over the past ten years, often related to Government initiatives north and south of the border – the MV Awards and Project Scotland in Scotland, the Russell Commission and ‘v’ in England.

Some of the main themes to emerge from the research:

1. Significant numbers of young people do volunteer

Volunteering activity is notoriously difficult to quantify. The Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) reported in 2004 that half of young people in the UK had experience of volunteering³. More recently, the ‘Being young in Scotland’ survey⁴ reported that between a quarter and a third of 11–25 year olds had volunteered within the past six months.

The Scottish youth population between the ages of 11 and 25 years is 985,000⁵. If we take the most conservative estimates of young people volunteering, that is still a quarter of a million young people active in their communities!

2. Young people are less likely to volunteer than most adults

While some research appears to show that young people and adults volunteer at similar rates, a recent analysis⁶ of the Scottish Household Survey 1999–2006 indicates that young people aged 16–24 are significantly less likely to volunteer than adults aged 35–74.

We also know that young people with disabilities, and from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to volunteer.

3. We know what supports young people volunteering

A survey conducted in 2006 by nfpSynergy⁸ for the Scout Association identified that young people involved in youth or sports clubs were more likely to demonstrate a desire to make a difference in the world.

It is important to develop the volunteering ‘habit’ early. Volunteer Development Scotland statistics⁹ show that 30% of all volunteers started their volunteering while at school – the highest of any stage of life.

4. Volunteering supports young people’s personal, social, and educational development

Studies consistently show that volunteering has a positive effect on young people’s skill development. A National Youth Agency study¹⁰ in 2007 showed that young people increased their confidence, self esteem and communication skills through volunteering. It also acted as a catalyst for engaging in formal learning or training.

In a Volunteer Development Scotland survey¹¹ of 120 employers (68 public sector and 52 private sector) in 2002, 45% stated that having experience of volunteering would result in young people being more likely to be selected for interview.

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Volunteering and Government policy

Volunteering has been an important strand of Scottish Government policy since the publication of its ‘Volunteering Strategy’¹² in 2004.

The recent Concordat¹³ between the Scottish Government and local authorities sets out fifteen national outcomes. Many of these will be directly served by the development of young people as volunteers – creating better employment opportunities, giving children the best start in life, improving the life chances of young people at risk, growing strong and supportive communities.

As the ‘Curriculum for Excellence’¹⁴ becomes more firmly embedded in the life of schools, it is being increasingly seen as a framework that supports young people’s educational development across a broader canvas. Successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens are all hallmarks of the volunteer. They are strongly reinforced in both the National Youth Work Strategy (2007)¹⁵ and the Volunteering Action Plan (2007)¹⁶.

Sustainable economic development and the ‘skills agenda’ is paramount within current Government thinking. The recent Skills Strategy¹⁷ outlines a vision of a smarter Scotland, where

leadership, the ability to work in teams, the entrepreneurial spirit, and creativity are central. It stresses the need for learning to be seen in its widest context.

“Youth work and volunteering opportunities offer young people the chance to develop confidence, motivation, and skills which stay with them for life.”

The ‘More choices, more chances’¹⁸ agenda, which focuses on supporting the most vulnerable young people back into education, training, and employment, is directly served by many youth volunteering programmes, run by organisations such as Fairbridge Scotland and the Prince’s Trust.

The important role of the third sector and the social economy in regenerating communities and facilitating community and civic empowerment is now widely recognised. Much of this activity is underpinned by volunteer effort – ‘grown’ locally, and starting with young people.

4 Recruitment

There is no one right way to recruit young people into volunteering. Young people get involved because they believe in the activity, and get something from it – friends, responsibility, challenges, and a laugh!

There is a widespread enthusiasm from young people to ‘put something back into the community’. Rumours of the death of altruism are premature!

Sometimes young volunteers come from within the organisation. The uniformed youth organisations such as the Guides are a good example of this. In other cases, young people may be referred by one organisation to another. This happens with Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and Project Scotland. Indeed, there appears to be a healthy ‘cross fertilisation’ between many organisations which recruit young volunteers.

Key messages:



- **Make use of positive peer promotion** Word of mouth is still the best recruitment tool. If young people can be enthused about a project, they will tell their friends.
- **Get the volunteer involved quickly** Actively welcome the young person’s volunteering ‘offer’, and give them a real feel for the work they could be doing.
- **Don’t forget 21st century communication** Make use of ‘e-recruitment’ (alongside more traditional methods). The web, social networking, and txt-ing all have their place. Plus they’re instant and cheaper.
- **Create youth-friendly organisations** Young people are more attracted by organisations which understand them. There are implications here for staff training.
- **Understand the young person’s year** Young people tend to operate on the academic year. For a year round commitment, recruit in September. For short project work, use the summer.

Visit the resources bank at www.youthscotland.org.uk



Encouraging hard to reach young people to volunteer	Barnardos	DVD promoting young people’s volunteering
How to keep your volunteers	Volunteer Centre Western Isles, free to download	Includes a section on young volunteers
Engaging Generation Y	South Australia Government, free to download	How to make organisations youth-friendly
Checklist for involving young people in team volunteering projects	Volunteer Centre Edinburgh Youth Team	Handy checklist

Volunteering as a way of life Sofie’s story

“I heard about the Big Lottery’s Young People’s Fund Local Panel at a Youth Forum meeting in Kilmarnock. Although I had never really volunteered before, it sounded interesting.

At the Volunteer Centre we looked at grant applications to the Fund from East Ayrshire and made recommendations to a National Committee. Over 18 months we endorsed over £412,000 worth of grants!

I can’t believe how much I have changed since my beginnings with the Panel. One thing is for sure – volunteering will always be part of my life.”

Mental health – no problem The Edinburgh Volunteer Centre story

For the past four years, Volunteer Centre Edinburgh has run a pre-volunteering course for young people with mental health problems in partnership with the adolescent unit at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, with the Duke of Edinburgh Award recently becoming an additional partner. Work has focussed on developing the capacity of referring staff (occupational therapists, youth workers) to support their young clients into volunteering. Guidelines for referrers have been developed and distributed.

The beautiful game Iain’s story

Iain was part of a group of young men who played football near the Southhouse Community Centre in Edinburgh. In May 2007, the local CLD Worker approached them with an offer of a football coaching course, and eleven of them took part. Apart from two, all were unemployed.

Staff from Edinburgh Leisure supported the project, and the newly trained coaches helped develop football coaching for other local young people as part of the Centre’s summer programme. This led to them running a community sports day.

Iain said, “I feel I’m giving something back to the community, and it saves the kids running about bored out of their head.”

Recruitment facts:



- When doing a ‘bag pack’ at the local supermarket, Scouts often put a recruitment leaflet in the shopping bag.
- Project Scotland has successfully used a variety of recruitment techniques – social networking sites, ‘chugging’, cinema ads. It found that 50% of young people recognised the ‘brand’ – and liked it.
- CSV has a non rejection policy, and doesn’t refuse anyone’s offer of volunteering.
- Volunteering opportunities for young people are available online at Young Scot’s ‘What’s on Where’ website – www.youngscotwow.org and on Scotland’s national portal for volunteering at www.volunteerscotland.org.uk

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Induction

Induction is simply making a good start by ensuring that your young volunteers are comfortable and equipped to begin their work.

Some organisations have a formal process (maybe including familiarisation with equipment). More often with young people, it is informal. Either way, it is a two way process. Good induction helps to secure the volunteer's commitment, and gives the organisation a chance to get to know its volunteers.

Some of the best examples of induction we came across were those which were organised and run by young people themselves. This maximises the fun factor, and gives credibility to what is being said.

A smooth introduction boosts career prospects Alastair's story

Alastair was in his last year at school, and had completed his Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards. He was considering a career in the medical field. His school had a very good relationship with the Children's Respite Care unit at Quarriers. At an introductory meeting, Alastair was shown round. The tasks that he could undertake were outlined, along with the training the staff would give him. Alastair was also encouraged to share his own skills.

Basic training and background information regarding the management structure formed part of the first few weeks, after which Alastair befriended a number of young people. As time has gone by, Alastair has been given further training and more responsibility.

Alastair said, "When I entered the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme I was unsure as to what career path I would like to go down. Attending the local Respite Care Centre has convinced me that medicine is the career for me."

The voices of experience Willie's story

"In my experience, the induction process for the Scouts was two-fold. I received a lot of 'on the job' training from experienced leaders, as well as receiving a scheme of training from the association itself. This is also ongoing. The training process was good because it encompassed modules which could be validated by talking about your experience as well as providing an opportunity to gain new skills. The modules were all relevant to aspects of fulfilling a leadership role for young people within the movement."

Focus on induction David's story

David got involved with the Xplore peer mentoring programme in Dundee after he had been a participant himself.

The induction phase includes a 14 week peer training programme that covers a wide range of issues that the young person may face as a peer volunteer. This is continued by a placement opportunity. Accreditation is an integral part of the process.

At just 16 David has completed his Youth Scotland Platinum Youth Achievement Award (comparable to an Advanced Higher) through volunteering in his peer mentor role.

David says, "Taking part in the Xplore peer mentor programme has given me a focus in my life that just wasn't there before."

Key messages:



- **Do it, and do it early** Don't leave induction as an 'added extra'. If possible, build in a session within two weeks of the young volunteer's arrival.
- **Use peers to 'make it real'** Using existing young volunteers has a double benefit. The new volunteer gets first hand information, and the current volunteer develops their skills.
- **Remember the adults** An organisation is only as friendly as the grumpiest adult in it! Sometimes adults need a culture shift to ensure that young people feel at home.
- **Be clear about expectations** Explain what is expected of the young volunteer. This includes time frames (how long, how often), roles (what they'll do), and – importantly – what the 'get out clause' is.
- **Emphasise the 'quid pro quo' of volunteering** There are always two sides to volunteering. Organisation and volunteer both benefit. There's no need to apologise for this.

Induction facts:



- The Prince's Trust 'Youth Steps' programme uses a fast paced treasure hunt round Glasgow as part of its induction day. The aim is to encapsulate the feel of the whole volunteering programme in a day.
- Community Service Volunteers (CSV) has a clear policy on volunteer induction. This must include – introduction to the work of the organisation, health and safety, the volunteer's role and responsibilities, as well as any specialist training.

Visit the resources bank at

www.youthscotland.org.uk



Involving young volunteers – a toolkit

Young TimeBank, free to download

Useful general guide

Active volunteering

Everything revolves around this! If the volunteering experience is good, you'll have no difficulty recruiting, developing, and retaining young people as volunteers. If it's rubbish, they'll vote with their feet.

As we've seen, young people get involved in volunteering for a host of different reasons. Once committed, it is likely that they will take on one of three broad roles:

- 1. Service delivery** – where they work with other staff and volunteers to deliver the 'core work' of the organisation. This may be anything from working as a youth club leader to helping out in a day centre for the elderly.
- 2. Activism and peer-led work** – where the young volunteer takes a more active role in determining what is undertaken. This could include peer education work on health issues, or starting a campaign to have young people's voices heard by local politicians.
- 3. Leadership** – where young people take on key roles in organisations that will shape the direction and policy of that organisation. This includes being part of management committees, acting as 'ambassadors', and representing the organisation in other public settings.

Most young volunteers find themselves starting with the first type of role, but the last twenty years has witnessed a marked growth in youth activism and young people adopting leadership roles. The development of the Scottish Youth Parliament and its team of MSYPs is good evidence of this.

Practical tasks, practical benefits

John's story

John is twenty two and lives in Kilmarnock in East Ayrshire. He has non-specific learning disabilities, and was referred to the Community Service Volunteers project in June 2006 to build his self confidence and self esteem.

A placement was found for John with the Princess Royal Trust Carers Cottage in Kilmarnock. This is a respite centre for young carers, and John's tasks included helping to organise and send out newsletters and raffle tickets, wrapping Christmas presents, sorting referrals to the centre, and organising family fun days. John's placement supervisor has supported John to work as a member of a team. The placement was so happy with John that they have asked him to stay for an extra two hours on his placement each week, and sometimes help out on other days.

John's confidence and self esteem have significantly improved since starting his placement and his workplace related skills have developed to the extent that he has recently been offered a full time job in Kilmarnock. This has been a huge step for John and he is now able to support himself independently.

Key messages:



- **Have high expectations of young volunteers** Young people flourish when a lot is expected from them. Youth work has a proud tradition of supporting young people to realise dreams they hardly imagined. Where possible, give young people ownership of the whole task, not just part of it.
- **Young people can do pretty much anything** There are very few 'no go areas' just because you're young. Organisations gave us examples of young people achieving fantastic challenges with the right training and support.
- **Volunteering builds confidence** Young people may come over as self assured. In reality, this may obscure feelings of inadequacy or shyness. Ensure that the volunteering experience is a positive one.
- **Risk is good** When you're young, you're going to take risks. Young people thrive when faced with challenging and risky situations.
- **Volunteering provides opportunities to encounter difference** Volunteering offers a unique opportunity to experience and understand the reality of other people's lives. This may mean those with a disability, those from another culture, or simply someone from the other side of town.
- **Make sure there are effective back-up and support systems** Adults have a key role to play in supporting young people as they venture into volunteering. This requires sensitivity. There should always be a 'safe place' where young volunteers can 'lick their wounds'.
- **Celebrate** Young people volunteer because they want to! They want to know when they've done well. Recognise this and celebrate with them.

A range of different roles Willie's story

"I got involved with The Scout Association when I bumped into a friend in the street and they mentioned they were short of leaders in the local group.

I am currently a Cub leader and also have leadership roles with other sections, including Explorer Scouts. I have also had the opportunity to work at four international scouting events. At the 21st World Scout Jamboree in 2007 I was responsible for 24 other adults in providing thousands of young people with facilities such as internet time, and answering every question you can possibly think of!

I am also currently the secretary for the Scottish Scout Network Council which has representatives from all over Scotland aged 18-25. It is a completely different role from the others, as it allows those who participate in it to have a voice in the decision making process.

Scouting has also enabled me to have experiences I would not have gained elsewhere. Most of all, volunteering has given me a desire to grasp the next big challenge!"

Dundee, Scotland, the world

Nick and Jackey's story

Nick and Jackey both got involved in 'Roars Not Whispers' through an advert emailed to them, seeking volunteers in their university in Dundee. They were accepted onto the Peer Leader programme, which develops skills to enable young people to work with other young people in their local areas, taking action on issues of justice.

The training programme started with a series of three interactive residential weekends, focusing on what change they wanted to make in the world, how to get other people involved in a participative way, and how to work safely with other young people. They were supported through mentoring, practical support and guidance from Volunteer Centre Dundee.

They decided to focus on poverty issues, and set up a local campaign, YEP Dundee, (Youth End Poverty), making a DVD of people they interviewed on the street about their attitudes to poverty, and then touring local high schools.

Their work was recognised when they were nominated for a Young Scot Award. They are currently seeking funding to expand their campaign to YEP Scotland. If this goes ahead they will seek more volunteers to help continue their work.

Nick says, "Before I joined the 'Roars not Whispers' project, I would see people struggling with poverty around me, and not even imagine that I could do anything about it. Now when I see an injustice, I call up the other Peer Leaders to see what we can do to fix it."

Jackey says, "We have been recognised for what we have done, and it is another encouragement to go on and continue."

Sport is the hook Vicky's story

Vicky initially took part in an Active Steps project (GAME) in Levenmouth during summer 2004. At this stage in Vicky's life, she was experiencing difficulties both at home and at school. After completing her Bronze Youth Achievement Award, she was accepted as a participant for the Sports Leader course. She was keen to take part, as it was a continuation of the success she was already experiencing.

Vicky was the only female of eleven young people selected for the course, on which she took part in a variety of sports and outdoor learning experiences. As her confidence grew, she learned the skills to deliver short activity sessions to her peers. Vicky returned to GAME to complete the voluntary work placement required to gain the Sport Leader Award.

Vicky was one of nine young people to complete the Sports Leader Level 1 Award in December 2005. Vicky also completed her Silver Youth Achievement Award along with several NGB Sports Awards.

Since completing the course Vicky has enjoyed the sense of achievement and is now focusing on her standard grades. She also now volunteers weekly with a junior youth club in her local community.

Active Volunteering facts:

- There are 2,000 young people aged 14–18 years taking part in Explorer Scouting in Scotland. 60% of them are also volunteering in the community.
- Fast Forward offers volunteering opportunities for both confident and more diffident young people. The former will find themselves out delivering peer education sessions or speaking at conferences. The latter are more likely to get involved in 'behind the scenes work' such as designing and producing leaflets and other publications.
- The Scouts have 60 fully trained young people aged 14–25 years who act as media spokespeople for the organisation.

Visit the resources bank at

www.youthscotland.org.uk

Junction 49	www.junction49.co.uk	Campaign supporting young people volunteering
Time Banking Scotland	www.vds.org.uk/timebanking/scotland.aspx	Opportunities for young people to share time and skills
Young TimeBank	www.youngtimebank.org.uk	Information for young people to set up their own projects or to volunteer their time
Volunteer Scotland	www.volunteer-scotland.org.uk	Scotland's national portal for volunteering opportunities
What young people want from volunteering	Institute of Volunteering Research	Report on what young people want from volunteering
Volunteering and youth development – making a positive difference	Ausyouth	A good practice and implementation guide

Training and development

There is a risk that we make volunteering sound too much like school or college!

The training process is there to help young people grow and develop – as volunteers, as specialists, and ultimately as human beings. It needs to be seen as a means to an end, not the end in itself.

Training can be ‘on’ or ‘off’ the job. For many young people, the practical experience of ‘learning through doing’ is the preferred approach. Simply ‘doing’ is not enough. The learning comes from reflecting with peers or trusted adults on how it went and what you might do differently next time.

Developing her own role Emily’s story

Emily is a young woman with myotonic dystrophy who lives in Dalkeith. She was referred to the CSV ‘Give and Take’ project to help her to develop an independent life.

Emily’s interest in card-making led to a placement at a recycled craft store, where she assists with sorting, pricing and displaying of arts and crafts materials. A Support Volunteer attends with Emily to assist her, but Emily is working towards attending independently.

Emily’s Local Area Coordinator says, “Emily seems to be flying with the volunteering. She is pleased to be working, and has become much more confident, due to her new role. She now has something in her life that is just hers, not a ‘service provision’.”

Multi-tasking in Orkney Margaret’s story

Eight young people from Sanday in Orkney participated in the pilot for the Youth Scotland Involvement Training (IT) programme. For their Stage 3 Action Plan, the young people planned to get a youth centre built on the island.

The architect is currently finalising the plans, and we have bought the buildings for the Centre with grants from the Scottish Government and Orkney Islands Council. We have received an ‘Investing in Ideas’ grant to fund the architect, and an exchange visit with a group in Kent. We are currently applying to the Big Lottery for the rest of the money.

The whole IT course has been very valuable for our group. They have voiced their opinions, listened to advice, learned to compromise, and yet made sure their voices are being heard.

Key messages:

- **Make use of flexible training programmes** Training programmes that take account of the reality of young lives will work better than rigid systems.
- **Build in reflection time** This may be in a group, as part of a formal training session, or it may happen informally over a cup of coffee.
- **Focus on skill development** Through working in real life situations, volunteering can help build the ‘core skills’ of team working, communication, and problem solving.
- **The importance of shadowing** Having the chance to observe another worker ‘in action’ is a valuable learning experience for young people. It is also a ‘safe’ way of getting a new volunteer out on the ‘shop floor’ at an early stage.
- **Adults and young people can be mentors** Linking a new volunteer up with a mentor or buddy can be an important way of supporting a young person’s personal development.

Training and Development facts:

- Girlguiding Scotland has a designated person in each county in Scotland to advise on the use of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.
- A unique aspect of Youth Scotland’s Youth Achievement and Dynamic Youth Awards is the ‘peer assessment’ role played by the young participants.
- Project Scotland has recruited 450 adult mentors for its volunteers from companies such as Standard Life, Ethicon, HBOs, and KPMG.
- Fast Forward encourages new volunteers to ‘shadow’ existing peer educators as part of their training.
- There is a dedicated Youth Development Worker for volunteering in each of Scotland’s 32 Volunteer Centres.

Visit the resources bank at www.youthscotland.org.uk

Bored Meetings?	Youth Scotland	Training pack supporting young people’s involvement in decision making.
TREaD	Youth Action Network	Online training modules for youth action workers includes sections on volunteering, youth participation and legislation.
Telling it like it is	Article 12 Scotland	Introduction to setting up a peer education project.
Trust Youth	Governance Hub, British Youth Council, and Children’s Rights Alliance for England (£6 ordered through NCVO website)	A young persons guide to being a trustee.
Keep It Real	Youth Scotland	Pack supporting youth participation.
Involvement Training	Youth Scotland	A training programme supporting young people to play a more active part in their youth group, school or community.

Recognition and accreditation

A number of recent research studies have shown that young people want recognition, but not necessarily formal accreditation.

Volunteering can become too 'professionalised'. At the end of the day, it should be fun. That said, it offers a unique path to demonstrate competence for those who have not achieved formally at school.

Many of the awards used to 'badge' young people's volunteering can be found in the 'stories' throughout 'No Limits'. A separate Youth Scotland leaflet outlines the range of Awards available.

Key messages:

- **Always value the work of young volunteers**
The 'thank you' is compulsory, the formal certificate is optional.
- **Volunteering develops 'soft skills'** Volunteering nurtures these skills, which increasingly employers are looking for.
- **Accreditation should follow volunteering, not vice versa** Get the volunteering right and the rest will fall into place.
- **Convert volunteering experience into 'CV speak'** Volunteering nearly always makes a young person more employable. They often just need some assistance in 'translation'.
- **Awards are complementary, not in competition** There is considerable 'cross-fertilisation' between the different national Awards. One often helps a young person achieve part of another.

Dynamic accreditation The St Luke's story

St Luke's High School in East Renfrewshire used Youth Scotland's Dynamic Youth Awards with 114 pupils in 2007 to provide accreditation for their transitions project in four associated Primary Schools.

With support from Community Learning and Development and Youth Scotland, young people worked on producing newsletters, a young leaders award project, a peer mediation training programme, and a summer transition project.

The Awards incorporate a peer assessment statement that encourages the distance travelled by each individual to be recognised. One young participant said, "What I like about the Award is having choice and responsibility. We were learning and having fun!"

Appreciation – the best recognition Ross' story

"I started volunteering as an assistant with a Cub Pack, as the service part of my Duke of Edinburgh's Award. I've never left, and I'm a volunteer leader six years later.

A year ago I discussed trying a new challenge. Now, I'm working with 14 to 18 year olds. It's very different, and I love it! My volunteering has helped me achieve the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and the Queen's Scout Award. I've also been presented with my Scouting 5 year service certificate. But the best recognition of all is the appreciation of the Scouts themselves."

Sailing to success Andy's story

"After the death of my girlfriend and being made unexpectedly redundant, I felt I had nothing to live for. I ended up on heroin for over 18 months. I knew I needed to get help, and moved to Edinburgh for a new start.

Through Project Scotland, I started off sailing as a voluntary Bosun with the Ocean Youth Trust (OYT), taking young people to sea – to challenge themselves in a different environment. I also gained three RYA sailing qualifications, sailing all over the West Coast of Scotland, and to Northern Ireland and meeting lots of new people.

At the end of the placement I was delighted to be offered the opportunity to stay with the OYT as a refit bosun."

Recognition and Accreditation facts:

- Shetland Islands Council's Youth Service offers the MV Awards, Youth Scotland's Youth Achievement Awards, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the John Muir Award, and the Junior Sports Leader Award.
- Involvement in the Scout Network can provide credits towards an Institute of Leadership qualification.
- The MV Volunteering Passport (www.mvvolunteeringpassport.org.uk) enables young people to find volunteering opportunities, check their hours and claim their MV awards.
- In a recent survey run by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, 64% of Gold Award holders believed that the Award helped them to secure their present job.
- Every Project Scotland volunteer has a 'record book' to note key milestones in their volunteering.
- A third of the Scottish Peer Education Network of 160 organisations are using the Youth Achievement Awards.

Visit the resources bank at www.youthscotland.org.uk

Dynamic Youth Awards and Youth Achievement Awards	Youth Scotland	Awards recognising and accrediting young people's achievements and contributions.
Volunteer Development Scotland	www.vds.org.uk	Online information on recognition for young volunteers
Power of 5	www.powerof5.org.uk	Provides information and advice to young people about volunteering and recognition.
www.youthinformation.com	Website	Includes a section on volunteering, training and accreditation.

In most cases, volunteers move on. This is true of adults, but especially true of young people.

They go to college or university, get a job, or start a new relationship. Often this will mean moving away. Because the young person's volunteer life cycle may be short, it needs to be a good one.

One of two things tends to happen when a young person reaches the natural end of their time volunteering. Either, they change role within the organisation – maybe taking on a leadership position. Or they take their volunteering experience onto another organisation. In both cases, adults play a key role in supporting this transition.

There are several stories throughout 'No Limits' which show how young volunteers have progressed, often finding that their volunteering was the catalyst for a new career.

From receptionist to youth worker Sally's story

Sally began working as a receptionist at the Local Education Office in Galashiels. She was asked to volunteer with Youth Chex – a youth bank in the Scottish Borders. After 10 months, she also started volunteering with Newtown St Boswells Youth Club. This was more challenging for Sally as it was the first real volunteering she had done in an 'adult' role.

In 2006, she became the Eildon panel youth worker, and also secured a part-time post with Community Learning & Development at Earlston Youth Project. Sally was enthusiastic enough to maintain these two posts on top of her full time receptionist's job!

As well as completing her 'Youth Work 1' in ACT, Sally has now applied to several Scottish universities to do an honours degree in community learning and development.

A life turned around Paula's story

"Since I was 13, I have been a young carer for my mum who has a mental illness. I found it hugely difficult at school to make friends and had trouble keeping my temper. I guess I never thought I was going to achieve very much.

Some of the projects I've been involved in through the YMCA, such as Make Poverty History, have been so amazing that I'll never forget them. If you had told me a year ago that this is what I'd be doing, I wouldn't have believed you."

Paula's placement through Project Scotland has helped turn her life around and given her the confidence to leave home, and start a career in youth work. She has now been offered a full time position at Perth YMCA, and soon hopes to begin a distance learning degree in youth work.

Key messages:

- **The ending is as important as the beginning** Get the recruitment and induction process right at the start, but also manage the exit at the end.
- **Signpost options** The bond between young volunteer and host organisation is often a deep one. The organisation is well placed to 'signpost' the next steps.
- **Trainers of 'the next generation'** Experienced volunteers (if staying on in an organisation) are often the best trainers and mentors for those 'coming through the ranks'.
- **Roles change** If a young person 'graduates' to a leadership role in their organisation, roles and boundaries will change – for both the young person and the adults.
- **Beware the 'Peter Pan' syndrome** It's natural to value a young person's contribution, but sooner or later they need to grow up! Don't hang on to someone past their 'sell by' date.

Progression facts:

- Girlguiding UK has produced two leaflets to help Guides make use of their guiding experience as they move into work – 'When the CV says Guiding, this is what you get', 'Skills – how to show your Guiding experience on your CV'.
- The Scout Association has had a policy since 1992 that there should be two young people on every main Scouting committee.
- Youth Scotland often finds that youth workers first encountered youth work through SMIT (now 'Involvement Training') – its leadership development programme for young people.
- A survey conducted with the UK's leading employers by the United Learning Trust found the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to be one of the most valued non-curricular activities in school for employers.
- Project Scotland uses 'survey monkey', the online questionnaire tool, as a way of collecting 'outcome data' from volunteers at the end of their placement.

Visit the resources bank at www.youthscotland.org.uk

The Stream	Youth Action Network	A free e-mentoring model for young people involved in youth action.
Explorer/Young Leader Scheme	The Scouts	Introductory workshop to the Young Leader Scheme.
Youth Leader Training	Boys Brigade	Training for BB officers and other youth group leaders.
Young Leader Training	Girl Guides	Leader training for young Guiders.

How youth work supports volunteering

Despite changing patterns in youth culture in Scotland (and the UK more widely), a significant number of young people continue to have contact with youth workers at some point in their childhood or adolescence. 'Being young in Scotland 2007'¹⁹ found that a third of 11–16 year olds were likely to attend a youth club or other club.

This means that youth work is exceptionally well placed to support young people's personal development, and nurture their growth from being consumers of services to becoming creators of services.

The Huskins 'ladder' of youth participation²⁰ provides a helpful model to describe this process. Huskins developed the Youth Achievement Awards using this model to identify the levels of responsibility taken by young people.

Stage	Characteristics
1 Contact	Young people have access to information and opportunity. Relationship level is low. Young people dependent.
2 Meet again	Youth workers and young people make contact, engage with each other. Trust and sharing begins. Initial contact.
3 Socialise	Young people begin to express opinions, test ideas and seek responses. Meet regularly. Learn names.
4 Take part	Programme developed to meet expressed and identified needs. Regular discussions based on trust. Some activities and referrals.
5 Be involved	Young people begin to assist in taking action and responsibility. Take part in activities developed from interests and needs. Introduce participation.
6 Organise	Young people begin to demand a share in the process and take responsibility. Take active part in planning and running activities and programme. Young people set agenda re: issues and responses.
7 Lead	Young people take full responsibility and control their actions. Independence achieved. Take responsibility for planning and running programme. Group work led by young people. Explore issues in depth.

As youth workers engage with young people across a spectrum of activities and in a wide range of settings, there are five key roles they can play in developing young people as volunteers:

- 1. Development of informal community volunteering** activity through normal youth work programmes.
- 2. Leadership development** within the host youth work organisation where leadership talent is nurtured, and put to use for the benefit of the organisation. This is the 'grow your own' model.
- 3. Shared leadership development** with other organisations where two or more organisations work together. For example one organisation's programme may meet the Award requirements of the other.
- 4. Provision of accreditation and awards** through a range of recognised national programmes.
- 5. Signposting to other volunteering opportunities** through informal contact with young people.

In each of these roles, the youth worker supports the young person to:

- Build self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships.
- Create learning and develop new skills.
- Encourage positive group atmospheres.
- Consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
- Develop a 'world view' which widens horizons and invites social commitment²¹.

This is good youth work.

Further help

We hope 'No Limits' has given you some useful ideas, contacts and guidance for your work with young volunteers. It is part of a suite of Youth Scotland publications and resources which include:

- **Growing Better Youth Work**
A Guide to Strengthening Your Volunteer Team
- **The Resources Bank**
A Database of Resources to Support Volunteering in Youth Work
- **No Limits**
Volunteering as a Model of Youth Development
- **Amazing Things**
A guide to youth awards in Scotland

These are all available free from Youth Scotland and through the website www.youthscotland.org.uk

Useful Contacts

Youth Scotland

www.youthscotland.org.uk

Youth Scotland, as the network of youth clubs and group in Scotland, offers those involved in youth work a range of information, training and support.

Community Learning and Development

www.youthlink.co.uk

YouthLink Scotland can help you find key local and national contacts in the field of community learning and development.

YouthLink Scotland

www.youthlink.co.uk

As the national agency for youth work, YouthLink Scotland supports its membership to develop and deliver quality youth work opportunities for young people in Scotland.

Youth Associations

www.youthscotland.org.uk

Youth Scotland works in partnership with Area Associations throughout Scotland to support local youth work. Find local contacts for your area at this website.

Volunteer Centre Network Scotland

www.volunteerscotland.org.uk

32 Volunteer Centres, one in each local authority area, help individuals (including young people) to access good quality volunteering opportunities and help local organisations to find volunteers. Use the link to access Scotland's national portal for volunteering opportunities and contact details for each Volunteer Centre.

Local Councils for Voluntary Service

www.scvo.org.uk

The Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) network consists of 56 independent organisations that provide a range of development and support services to voluntary organisations across Scotland.

Volunteer Development Scotland

www.vds.org.uk

Volunteer Development Scotland, Scotland's Centre for Excellence in volunteering, works in partnership with the 32 Volunteer Centres. It also supports the protection of vulnerable groups through the provision of free disclosure services, including expert advice and guidance for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

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- ¹⁸ 'More choices, more chances' (Scottish Executive 2006, Scottish Government 2007)
- ¹⁹ 'Being young in Scotland 2007' (YouthLink Scotland 2007)
- ²⁰ © John Huskins 1995
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